

**Scoping Statement
Trout Creek Fuels Reduction Project**

**USDA Forest Service
Shoshone National Forest
South Zone/Wind River Ranger District
Fremont County, Wyoming**

Introduction

The Shoshone National Forest is proposing a fuels management project along the Trout Creek, Camp Creek and Spring Creek drainages to address concerns identified by the District's interdisciplinary team (IDT) related to vegetative condition, fuel loading and potential wildfire severity. The project would include the use of prescribed fire treatment in approximately 1,000 acres of sagebrush/grass habitat with some under-burning of timbered stands.

The proposed action is located approximately 17 miles west-northwest of Dubois, along the Trout Creek, Camp Creek and Spring Creek drainages, T42N, R109W, portions of Sections 7, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22. (See Maps 1 & 2)

Proposed Action

The proposed action is designed to reintroduce fire into sagebrush/grass habitat and to allow under-burning to occur in small stands of timber. The objective is a mosaic burn across the open sagebrush/grass areas, with a more thorough under-burn in the smaller timbered stands. Potential benefits of the proposal include improved vegetative condition class, reduced sagebrush and other conifer fuels in the open areas and reduced ladder fuels in the timber stands. Additional benefits of the project would include enhanced willow stands for moose habitat, improved range vegetation for grazing and reduced potential for erratic wildfire behavior. Implementation could be during any season.

The proposed action is considered consistent with the Shoshone Forest Plan, as amended. The action is located in the Warm Springs Analysis Area (pages J-293 thru 298) and in Management Direction Area 2B (Rural and Roaded Natural Recreation, pages III-124 thru 131) and 7E (Wood-fiber Production and Utilization, pages III-173 thru 180).

Purpose and Need

Purpose for the Action. The primary purpose for the proposed action is to reintroduce fire as a management tool into the ecosystem. An emphasis would be given to priority areas to reduce wildfire hazards to life and property, to firefighters, and to reduce fire suppression costs by means of vegetation and fuels treatments. All actions would be taken in an effort not to adversely affect other resources within or near the treatment areas.

Need for the Action. The Forest Plan, Chapter III, includes direction for management of the Forest. The need for action is derived from comparing relevant Forest Plan direction/desired conditions to the existing conditions in the analysis area. At this time, comparisons of existing and desired conditions show where a need or opportunity for action exists. Existing fuel level within the sagebrush/grass and timbered areas are severe and could lead to extensive ecosystem damage, increased suppression cost and reduced firefighter safety caused by intense wildfire effect and behavior. The proposed action was developed in response to that management need or opportunity.

Scoping and Public Involvement

This Scoping Notice is provided to encourage public participation in the development of this proposed action. Scoping is to determine the scope of the issues to be addressed and to identify issues and concerns relative to the proposed action. This is an opportunity for your involvement early in the planning process; your comments and suggestions are needed and encouraged. Alternatives to the proposed action will be determined and environmental consequences analyzed during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process initiated by this Scoping Notice. We are asking for comments, alternatives to the proposed action and any information you may want us to consider during planning and analysis. Comments received, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record on this proposal, and will be available for public inspection.

The IDT, consisting of resource specialists, conducted an initial review of the proposal and identified that the project's scope is such that the project could be evaluated pursuant to Categorical Exclusion 31.2(6) (Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction (Service level D, FSH 7709.56). Based on comments from the public, state, and/or Federal agencies, the IDT may include possible project design/mitigation measures, consider other alternatives to the proposed action and will reassess the appropriate level of documentation needed under the National Environmental Policy Act.

Contact

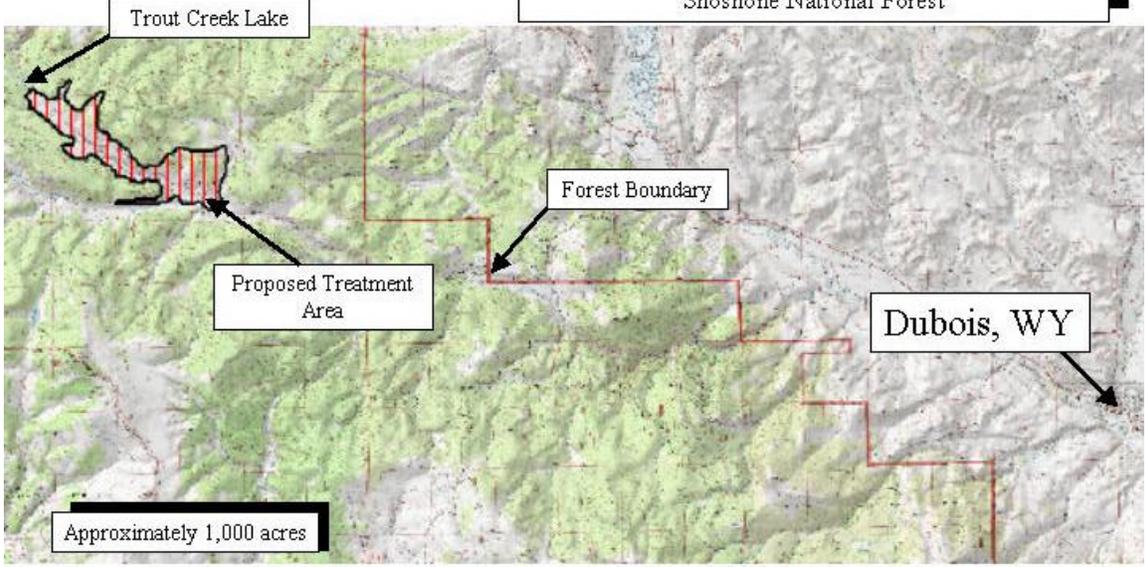
The public is provided this opportunity to identify and submit issues and concerns they feel the Forest Service should address related to this project. If you feel you have information pertinent and specifically related to the proposed action, we welcome your participation during this 30-day public comment period. Questions related to the proposed action should be directed to Sean Johnson, Acting Fire Management Officer, telephone (307) 455-2466, or email at [sdjohnson01@fs.fed.us](mailto:sjohnson01@fs.fed.us). Your comments will be most helpful if received in writing **no later than May 12, 2004**. Written comments can

be mailed to: Mark King, NEPA Coordinator, South Zone/Washakie Ranger District, 333 E. Main Street, Lander, WY 82520, email at comments-rocky-mountain-shoshone-windriver@fs.fed.us, or faxed to (307) 578-1204 ATTN: Mark King. Please reference “Trout Creek Project” in the subject line of your response.

/s/ Burns Davison (for)
Rick Metzger
District Ranger
Wind River Ranger District

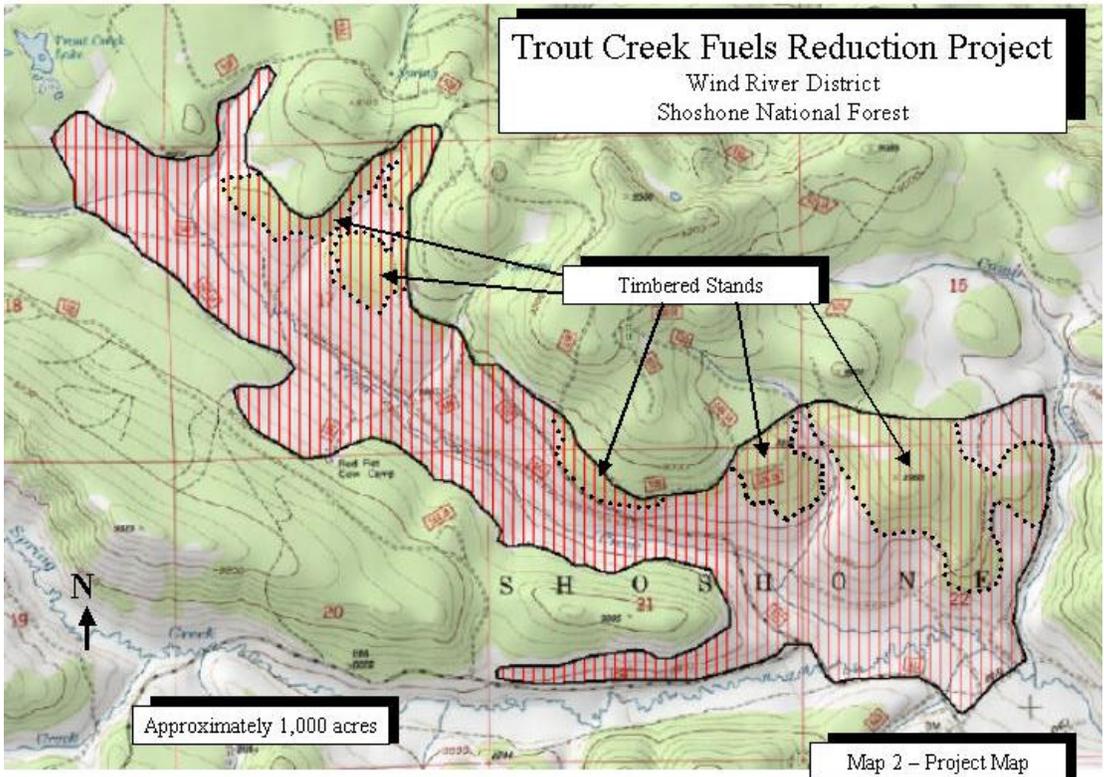
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Map 1 - Vicinity Map

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Map 2 - Project Map